

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

Please amend Claim 6 as follows:

6. (TWICE AMENDED) A method for forming within a silicon semiconductor substrate employed within an integrated circuit microelectronics fabrication a silicon oxide dielectric field oxide (FOX) isolation layer comprising:

providing a silicon semiconductor substrate;

forming upon the silicon semiconductor substrate a silicon oxide pad oxide layer;

forming upon the silicon oxide pad oxide layer a patterned silicon nitride mask layer; and

oxidizing the silicon substrate locally at a first oxidation temperature of at least above 1100 degrees centigrade through the patterned silicon nitride mask layer to form silicon oxide dielectric field oxide (FOX) isolation layers to prevent out-diffusion of nitrogen species and minimize formation of silicon oxynitride inclusions within the silicon oxide layers.